



The Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation, one year on

Today marks one year since *The Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation* (ACPDPM) was launched, the first technology industry code of its kind globally to include safeguards against misinformation and mandatory commitments for all signatories.

This code provides the public, industry and Government different avenues to strengthen tech efforts to combat misinformation, and we're using the anniversary to highlight some of those opportunities.

1. We're encouraging the public to avail themselves of the complaints portal on DIGI's website if they're concerned that signatories aren't meeting their commitments under the code, and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network ([ACCAN](#)) is [helping us get the word out today](#) to consumers.
2. We're encouraging other technology companies to sign the code, which has been designed so that a diverse range of services can make commitments to protect Australians against misinformation and disinformation. Two additional companies adopted the code since it was first launched in February 2021.
3. We're also encouraging the Government to release the report provided by the ACMA in June 2021 that assessed the code, which will be a crucial input in DIGI's efforts to strengthen the code.

Anniversaries always provide a good opportunity to look back and look forward. Looking back:

- Since the code was launched, it has been adopted by eight signatories – Apple, Adobe, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Redbubble, TikTok and Twitter – who have cemented their mandatory commitments, and nominated additional opt-in commitments, through public disclosures on the DIGI website.
- In May 2021, they each released a transparency report with insights into the scale and management of misinformation and disinformation on their services. The reports outline the work being undertaken to remove harmful content, flag false claims, address fake accounts, elevate reputable content, improve Australians' media literacy and partner with researchers.
- In October 2021, DIGI strengthened the code with an

independent complaints committee to resolve complaints about possible breaches by signatories of their code commitments, and a portal on its website for the public to raise such complaints. The independent members of that committee are Dr Anne Kruger, Victoria Rubensohn AM and Christopher Zinn.

Looking forward, DIGI will continue to strengthen the code in 2022 by:

- Introducing guidelines to drive improvements and consistency in the next set of annual transparency reports.
- Appointing an independent reviewer Hal Crawford who will fact check and attest all signatories' transparency reports prior to publication.
- Conducting a review of the code which will proactively invite the views of the public, civil society and Government on how it can be improved.

In order to strengthen the code in line with the Government's expectations, the review will be most effective if it can take into account the report provided by the ACMA in June 2021 that assessed the code.

While DIGI has not yet seen that report, we do believe that the ACMA's powers need to be strengthened in relation to misinformation and disinformation. For example, as we highlighted [in our recent submission to the Online Safety and Social Media Inquiry](#), DIGI has asked the Government if the ACMA could be afforded powers to provide an appeals mechanism in the event that there are disagreements in the final outcomes of complaints raised through DIGI's complaints portal.

DIGI also intends for the review to take into account the revised European Union disinformation code which is expected by the end of March – the primary comparable code globally, which is focused on disinformation and with opt-in commitments only – as well as the next set of signatories' transparency annual reports.

We look forward to our shared work with many of you in addressing harmful mis- and disinformation, and maximising *The Australian Code of Practice of Disinformation and Misinformation's* role in that effort.

Sunita Bose

Managing Director, DIGI

[Learn more about the ACPDM](#)



Social media & online safety inquiry

In January, DIGI gave evidence at the House Select Committee on Social Media and Online Safety. We welcomed this inquiry as a way to have a deeper conversation about the immense amount of industry work in online safety, and the challenges. The inquiry also presents an opportunity to ensure effectiveness and consistency in the online safety reform agenda. **DIGI's submission advances eight recommendations that we**

encourage the committee and the Government to consider in its efforts to advance online safety in Australia in 2022.

[Read DIGI's submission](#)



Online Safety Act codes

DIGI has been hard at work on new mandatory codes of practice under the Online Safety Act, which we're leading with the Communications Alliance, supported by a steering group of other industry associations. These codes need to be approved and registered by the eSafety Commissioner, so we're also working closely with them on this effort.

So what will these codes mean for Australians? They will introduce standard protections across the whole digital industry, in areas such as child sexual exploitation material, pro-terror content, and extreme crime and violence. The first code will be registered by the Commissioner around July, and we intend to release it for public consultation in the coming months.

[Read more about the codes from eSafety](#)



Online Privacy Bill

DIGI fully supports the intention of the Online Privacy Bill to protect the privacy of minors online and to safeguard them from harm. However, we do not believe that the scope of services covered under the Bill is wide enough to ensure a standardisation of protection for minors across all digital services they use. We encourage specific privacy protections for minors be expanded upon within the Privacy Act, and have provided a separate submission to that review. We're also concerned about the Bill's requirements for age verification and for parental consent, which require additional data collection, and may not always be accessible to all young people.

[Read DIGI's submission](#)

DIGI in the media

[Aussie Internet Regulator Wants Regulatory Power to Keep the Internet Regulated](#)

Gizmodo Australia | February 17, 2022

[Craig Kelly rebukes Google and Facebook for removal of his content at social media inquiry](#)

The Guardian | January 20, 2022

[Meta and Twitter want a review of Australian government's social media laws next year](#)

ZDNet | January 19, 2022

[Big Tech says it is confused by Australia's growing online safety laws](#)

InnovationAus | January 18, 2022

[Twitter, Snapchat warns government off undermining online anonymity](#)

Sydney Morning Herald | January 14, 2022

[Senate Report Says It Might Be a Good Idea to Tackle Foreign Interference on Social Media. Like Now](#)

Gizmodo | December 20, 2021

[PM to launch inquiry into social media and mental health](#)

Mumbrella | December 1, 2021



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